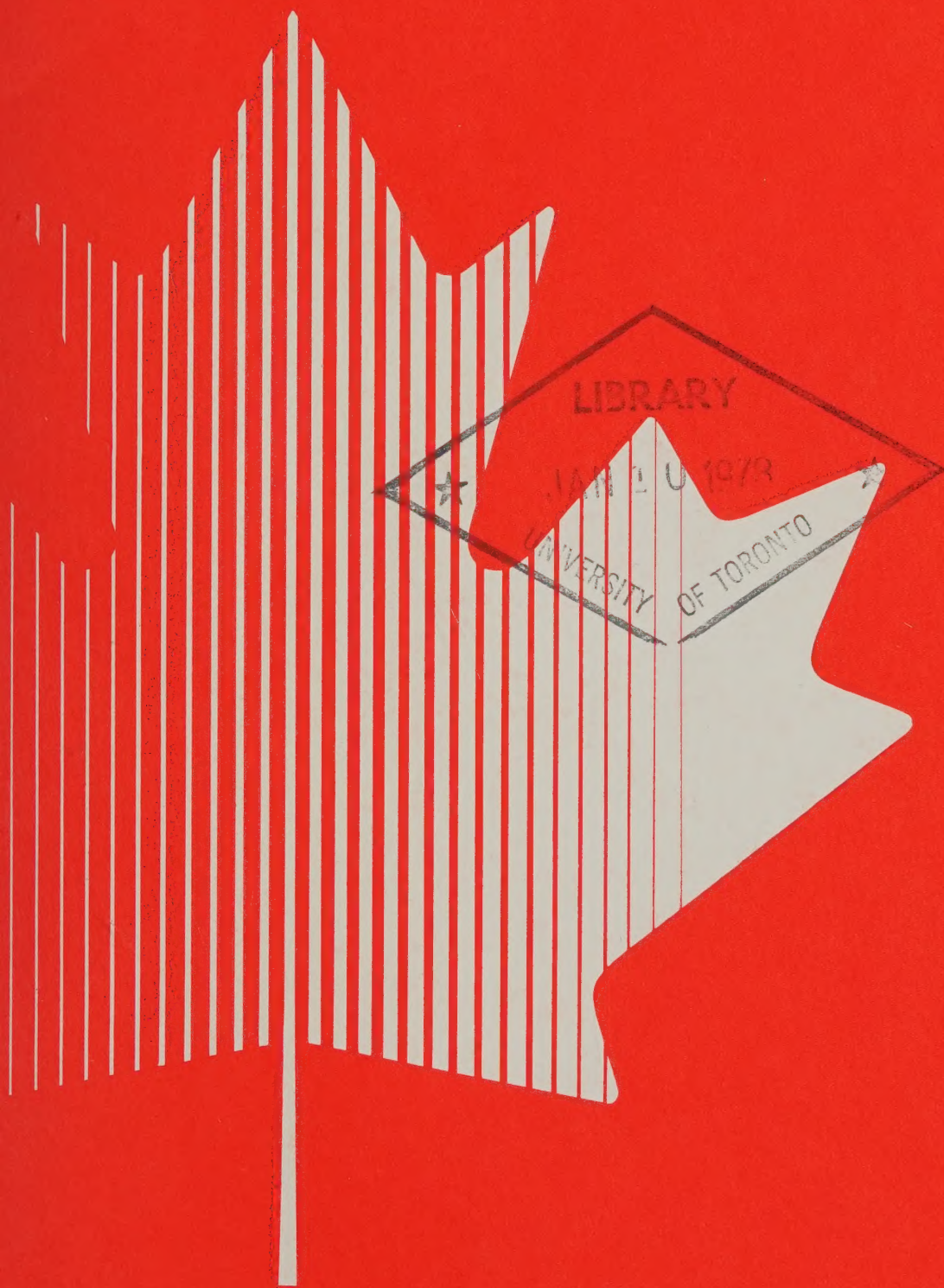



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# Canada and NATO



*Reference Paper 77*



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# Canada and NATO

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In April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington, giving birth to the Atlantic Alliance — a unique association of 15 countries that has come to be known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Canada played a leading role in the formation of NATO, which was designed primarily to ensure the preservation of peace and the security of its members through a collective approach to defence. Despite a variety of crises since then — such as the Berlin, Hungary, Cuba and Czechoslovakia crises — and the persistence of local wars in other parts of the world, peace has prevailed in the NATO area for the past quarter-century. This success has assisted its members in attaining a high degree of prosperity and well-being.

In looking back over the profound changes that have occurred in the circumstances facing the Atlantic Alliance, the capacity it has demonstrated to respond effectively to new challenges is striking. Besides keeping the peace, NATO has developed into a major forum for the exchange of information and the harmonization of views on issues of common concern to its members that range from *détente* to science and the environment. The process of continuing consultation on a wide range of shared problems is of particular value to smaller NATO members such as Canada because it provides them with direct access to the thinking of their allies and an opportunity to make their own views known.

### **Origins of the alliance**

NATO was formed in response to concern about Soviet expansionary aims in Europe after the Second World War and as a result of the impasse that had developed in the United Nations. By the use of its veto in the Security Council, the U.S.S.R. opposed efforts by many member nations to implement the collective-security measures of the



UN Charter. Faced with a threat to their security while Europe was still recovering from the ravages of the Second World War, the Western countries resolved to group themselves into an alliance that would give substance to their collective resolve to resist aggression.

Despite the fact that collective security had proved unattainable through the agency of the United Nations, the organization of the Atlantic Alliance was carried out within the framework of the UN Charter, Article 51 of which gives member nations the rights of both individual and collective self-defence.

A preliminary step towards the establishment of NATO was taken in March 1948, when Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Brussels Treaty, which dealt with mutual assistance. Other Western countries subsequently began giving consideration to their own needs and to the possibility of a broader collective arrangement. On April 28, 1948, the idea of a single mutual-defence system, including and superseding the Brussels Treaty, was put forward by the Canadian Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent. Negotiations on the North Atlantic Treaty began in July 1948 among the countries of the Brussels Treaty, the United States and Canada. These were later joined by Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Portugal, and the treaty was actually signed in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 1949. Greece and Turkey joined the Alliance in 1952, and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955.

### **Terms of the treaty**

Both in the treaty's preamble and in Article I, the signatories emphasized their support for the United Nations and for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter. Subsequent articles deal with collective defence and provide for consultation "whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened". Participation in this collective-defence effort does not, however, prejudice the freedom of decision of member countries or involve an automatic commitment concerning the means of providing mutual support. Article 5 states that each member should take "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed forces to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area".

Canada, whose spokesman was the late Lester B. Pearson, was responsible for the inclusion in the Treaty of Article 2, which states



that the signatories “will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being”. “They will seek,” the article goes on, “to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.” It is this article that provides the framework for the increasingly important “non-military” aspects of the Alliance’s activities.

Article 9 of the Treaty provides for the establishment of the Organization’s governing body, the North Atlantic Council. There are generally two meetings of the Council each year attended by foreign ministers — an autumn meeting in Brussels and a spring meeting that rotates among the capitals of NATO countries. Between these ministerial gatherings, the Council meets at least once a week at NATO headquarters in Brussels at the level of permanent representatives. These representatives, who have the rank of ambassador, head the national delegations accredited to NATO. The Council is assisted in its activities by a series of committees and agencies covering a wide range of interests.

When France withdrew from the integrated defence system of the Alliance in 1966, the Defence Planning Committee, made up of representatives from the 14 remaining Alliance members, assumed responsibility for dealing with all questions concerning NATO’s collective defence activities. Like the Council, the DPC meets twice yearly at the defence-minister level and, in the intervals, at the permanent-representative level.

Certain ministers of defence also attend twice-yearly meetings of NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group. The NPG was established in 1966 as a forum for involving the non-nuclear members of the Alliance in NATO’s nuclear affairs. Since its establishment, the NPG has widened participation in the nuclear-decision-making process and has created an awareness among Alliance members of the factors that would have to be taken into account if the release of nuclear weapons were even to be considered. The NPG consists of four permanent members (Germany, Italy, Britain and the United States), which are joined by three or four rotating members serving for 18-month periods.



The North Atlantic Council, the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group are all chaired by the Secretary-General of NATO. All NATO bodies reach decision by consensus rather than majority vote. The Secretary-General is also the head of the NATO International Staff, which provides the administrative support for a large part of the Alliance's activities.

The senior military authority of NATO is the Military Committee, which provides advice to both the Council and the DPC. It meets periodically at the level of chiefs of defence staff, as well as at the level of national military representatives, who are the personal representatives of their chiefs of staff. The Military Committee is served by an International Military Staff, which acts as its executive agency and functions like the civilian secretariat. The Chairman of the Military Committee is selected by the chiefs of staff for two or three years, and attends all meetings of the Council and the DPC. NATO's integrated military forces are divided into three major commands (Europe, the Atlantic and the Channel). Each command is headed by a senior allied officer (Saceur, Saclant and Cicchan), who is responsible for planning the defence of his own area and for the conduct of NATO's land, sea and air exercises.

## **Canadian military participation in NATO**

Recognizing that its security is closely linked with that of the other Alliance members, Canada has been prepared to contribute armed forces to NATO's collective-defence effort. These forces, particularly those stationed in Europe, constitute tangible evidence of Canada's continuing commitment to the Alliance, besides reinforcing its participation in the Alliance's consultation process.

Canadian forces in Europe numbering approximately 5,000 men are stationed in the Black Forest region of Southern Germany at Lahr and Baden-Sölingen. They consist of a Mechanized Battle Group and an Air Group of three squadrons of CF 104 aircraft for use in conventional hostilities. Although relatively small, these forces have gained a deservedly high reputation in Europe for their professional proficiency. Canada has also agreed to make available a battalion group and two squadrons of CF 5 aircraft stationed in Canada for use in the defence of the Alliance's northern flank.



Finally, Canada also contributes significant naval forces to the NATO Command responsible for the defence of the North Atlantic.

### **NATO's contribution to détente**

NATO strength and solidarity can take much of the credit not only for maintaining peace in Europe but also for the progress so far made in resolving East-West political issues. Canada's membership in the Alliance entitles it to take an active part in the formulation of Western positions on these issues that takes place within the NATO framework. In addition, Canada's NATO membership gives it a role in the negotiations with the other side. Canada is currently participating in two related negotiations that have opened a further phase in the attempts to ease tensions and increase security in Europe. A number of Canadian interests are involved in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, particularly in efforts being made by the West to improve the freedom of movement for individuals between participating states. In the talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, which are under way in Vienna, Canada is effectively contributing to the Western effort to reduce the confrontation of forces in Central Europe.

### **Other NATO activities**

Over the years, NATO has embarked on a series of programs to stimulate co-operation among its members in various areas of common interest.

For example, there are continuing efforts to exploit the possibilities that exist for co-operation among the allies in the development and production of defence equipment. These permit the most economical use of defence resources, besides producing mutual commercial advantage. For Canada, there is the additional advantage of technological "spin-off", particularly in such sophisticated areas as space and communications.

To assist in maintaining the military forces of the Alliance at a high level of efficiency, a number of co-operative arrangements exist among NATO members in the field of training. Canada, for instance, extends the use of its training facilities, on a cost-recovery basis, to Britain and Germany. Besides assisting Canada's NATO allies, these activities bring regional economic benefits to Canada at

some base facilities that might otherwise be closed down or remain dormant.

Since NATO includes most of the world's major industrial states, the Alliance has undertaken a successful program of co-operative projects concerned with the environment, under the auspices of its Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society. NATO also has a Science Committee that meets regularly to exchange views and experience on scientific questions of common concern.

## **Conclusion**

Canada has contributed to and benefited from its NATO association in a variety of ways suggested above. Apart from this, Canada's NATO membership can play an increasingly significant role in strengthening relations with the countries of Western Europe as they develop their political and economic unity through the European Economic Community. The European members of NATO attach importance to the Alliance as the guarantor of their security, and Canada's active participation in the political and military activities of NATO will, it is hoped, have a positive impact as its relations with the new Europe develop.







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